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28 July 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Career Council

SUBJECT: Revision of Fitness Report Form No. 45, 1 October 1954

1. Simultaneous with the adoption of the Fitness Report, the Agency Career Council directed that studies be initiated toward its improvement. The Director of Personnel requested the Assessment and Evaluation Staff, Office of Training, to undertake these studies. Results to date are incorporated in an attached proposed revision of the form (TAB A) and in recommendations concerning policies and procedures surrounding its use.

2. The proposals and recommendations are based on the following steps in which the Office of Personnel and Office of Training have cooperated closely:

- a. Analyses of the supervisors' replies to a questionnaire on the current Fitness Report.
- b. Statistical studies of how supervisors are using the form.
- c. Interviews with 16 supervisors, career management and personnel officials conducted by [REDACTED] OP.
- d. Development of a revision as the best means of clarifying issues and providing the basis for discussion.
- e. Submission of this revision to 60 supervisors and personnel officials in a series of 11 meetings. Each group spent a minimum of two hours in analyzing and discussing the report and possible policies.
- f. Further revision in close cooperation with OP.
- g. Presentation to a Career Council task force of the basis for the revision and accompanying recommendations.
- h. Submission in near future of the new revision of the form to the 60 supervisors, along with a brief questionnaire to determine whether the sense of their criticisms and recommendations had been carried out.

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3. My major conclusions at this point are:

- a. If every criticism were accepted, there would be no part left of either the present form or the proposed revision; if every suggestion for addition were accepted, the form would approximate book size.
- b. With all its defects, the present report has not aroused overwhelming opposition among supervisors. Hence, precipitous change is not necessary.
- c. "To show or not to show" the report to the subordinate-- that is the most controversial issue concerning fitness reporting.
- d. The proposed revision is on the right track, having been preferred over the present form by all who have seen it.
- e. The present report requires too much information about individuals (1) in certain-type jobs, and (2) when the supervisor has known the individual for a very short period.
- f. Changes in fitness report forms and procedures should be evolutionary and involve wide contact with and explanation to supervisors.

4. Major conclusions concerning the "show-not show" issue are:

- a. The present policy is not working in accordance with the original intent that supervisors make the decision on whether or not to show the report. Office-wide policies have been adopted on this question.
- b. There is a sizable minority, if not a majority, who oppose present policy because it is not consistent across the Agency.
- c. A majority would approve showing a report concerned with job performance and designed to help the supervisor deal more effectively with his subordinates.
- d. A minority will strongly resist showing a form which is not designed for that purpose.
- e. A majority would approve a report which is a privileged communication to management, provided there existed a report that could be shown.

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- f. A small minority will oppose any privileged communication of any type.
 - g. The greatest approval would be obtained for a form designed to show, with the policy to show unless the supervisor felt it unwise. In such an instance, he would explain on the form why he did not show the report.
 - h. A majority would approve two especially designed reports, one to promote effective dealing of supervisor with subordinate, the other a privileged communication to management.
 - i. The present form does not lend itself to a clear-cut show-not show policy since opinion on showing it is close to being equally divided.
5. It is recommended that
- a. The proposed form, with whatever minor changes that are made as a result of Paragraph 2h, be adopted.
 - b. The form be divided into two physically separate parts, the one to be concerned with job performance and the other with potential.
 - c. Part I and Part II both be used for the annual report.
 - d. Part I only be used for
 - (1) Special reports (changes in assignment, changes in supervisor)
 - (2) Individuals on jobs not requiring the type of information obtained in Part II.
 - e. Part I be treated as a step toward a form and procedure which will really be helpful to the supervisor in dealing with his subordinates and the policy of showing be optional with the individual supervisor, with action taken explained on the form.
 - f. Part II be treated as a privileged communication from the supervisor to management above him and the policy be that it not be shown to the subordinate.

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- g. The report be given a trial run in one small office (where not more than 25 people are available to be rated) in each major component of the Agency.
- h. The adoption of the report Agency-wide be preceded or accompanied by a training program involving selected supervisors, career management and personnel officials. They should be selected to provide in each office or division a small group, available for at least a year after introduction of the report, to answer questions that will arise among supervisors generally.
- i. The Career Council
 - a. Adopt in principle the philosophy concerning fitness reporting expressed in the attached paper (TAB B).
 - b. Direct the Office of Personnel and the Assessment and Evaluation Staff, OTR, to continue their studies to adapt fitness reporting forms and procedures to the ends served.
 - c. Direct the Office of Personnel and the Assessment and Evaluation Staff, OTR, to exert special and immediate effort to develop separate procedures for the purposes of (1) helping the supervisor deal more effectively with his subordinates, and (2) providing management with the kind of information it needs to improve its action in personnel matters.

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Assessment and Evaluation Staff
Office of Training

2 Enclosures

TAB A - Proposed Revision

TAB B - "Developing A Fitness
Reporting System"

- 4 -

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FITNESS REPORT (Part I) PERFORMANCE

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Consult current instructions for completing this report.

FOR THE SUPERVISOR: This report is designed to help you express your evaluation of your subordinate and to transmit this evaluation to your supervisor and to appropriate career management and personnel officials. Completion of the report can help prepare you for a discussion with your subordinate of his strengths and weaknesses. It is mandatory that you inform the subordinate where he stands with you. It is optional whether you inform him by showing the report or by other means. It is recommended that you read the entire form before completing any question. If this report is the INITIAL REPORT on the employee, it MUST be completed and forwarded to the Office of Personnel no later than 30 days after the due date indicated in item 8 of Section A below.

SECTION A.

GENERAL

1. NAME (Last) (First) (Middle)			2. DATE OF BIRTH	3. SEX	4. SERVICE DESIGNATION
5. OFFICE/DIVISION/BRANCH OF ASSIGNMENT			6. OFFICIAL POSITION TITLE		
7. GRADE	8. DATE REPORT DUE IN OP	9. PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REPORT (Inclusive dates)			
10. TYPE OF REPORT (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> INITIAL <input type="checkbox"/> REASSIGNMENT-SUPERVISOR <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> ANNUAL <input type="checkbox"/> REASSIGNMENT-EMPLOYEE					

SECTION B.

CERTIFICATION

1. FOR THE RATER: THIS REPORT ☐ HAS ☐ HAS NOT BEEN SHOWN TO THE INDIVIDUAL RATED. IF NOT SHOWN, EXPLAIN WHY NOT:

A. CHECK (X) APPROPRIATE STATEMENTS:

THIS REPORT REFLECTS MY OWN OPINIONS OF THIS INDIVIDUAL.	IF INDIVIDUAL IS RATED "1" IN C1 OR D, A WARNING LETTER WAS SENT TO HIM & A COPY ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT.
THIS REPORT REFLECTS THE COMBINED OPINIONS OF MYSELF AND PREVIOUS SUPERVISORS.	I CANNOT CERTIFY THAT THE RATED INDIVIDUAL KNOWS HOW I EVALUATE HIS JOB PERFORMANCE BECAUSE (Specify):
I HAVE DISCUSSED WITH THIS EMPLOYEE HIS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES SO THAT HE KNOWS WHERE HE STANDS.	

B. THIS DATE C. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR D. SUPERVISOR'S OFFICIAL TITLE

2. FOR THE REVIEWING OFFICIAL: RECORD ANY SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITH THE SUPERVISOR, OR ANY OTHER INFORMATION, WHICH WILL LEAD TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THIS REPORT.

☐ CONTINUED ON ATTACHED SHEET

I certify that any substantial difference of opinion with the supervisor is reflected in the above section.

A. THIS DATE B. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE OF REVIEWING OFFICIAL C. OFFICIAL TITLE OF REVIEWING OFFICIAL

SECTION C.

JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. RATING ON GENERAL PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES

DIRECTIONS: Consider ONLY the productivity and effectiveness with which the individual being rated has performed his duties during the rating period. Compare him ONLY with others doing similar work at a similar level of responsibility. Factors other than productivity will be taken into account later in Section D.

☐

INSERT
RATING
NUMBER

- 1 - DOES NOT PERFORM DUTIES ADEQUATELY: HE IS INCOMPETENT.
- 2 - BARELY ADEQUATE IN PERFORMANCE: ALTHOUGH HE HAS HAD SPECIFIC GUIDANCE OR TRAINING, HE OFTEN FAILS TO CARRY OUT RESPONSIBILITIES.
- 3 - PERFORMS MOST OF HIS DUTIES ACCEPTABLY: OCCASIONALLY REVEALS SOME AREA OF WEAKNESS.
- 4 - PERFORMS DUTIES IN A COMPETENT, EFFECTIVE MANNER.
- 5 - A FINE PERFORMANCE: CARRIES OUT MANY OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES EXCEPTIONALLY WELL.
- 6 - PERFORMS HIS DUTIES IN SUCH AN OUTSTANDING MANNER THAT HE IS EQUALLED BY FEW OTHER PERSONS KNOWN TO THE SUPERVISOR.

COMMENTS:

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2. RATINGS OF PERFORMANCE OF Release 2001/07/28 : CIA-RDP78-03578A000700040008-4

DIRECTIONS:

- State in the spaces below up to six of the more important SPECIFIC duties performed during this rating period. Place the most important first. Do not include minor or unimportant duties.
- Rate performance on each specific duty considering ONLY effectiveness in performance of this specific duty.
- For supervisors, ability to supervise will always be rated as a specific duty (do not rate as supervisors those who supervise a secretary only).
- Compare in your mind, when possible, the individual being rated with others performing the same duty at a similar level of responsibility.
- Two individuals with the same job title may be performing different duties. If so, rate them on different duties.
- Be specific. Examples of the kind of duties that might be rated are:

ORAL BRIEFING	HAS AND USES AREA KNOWLEDGE	CONDUCTS INTERROGATIONS
GIVING LECTURES	DEVELOPS NEW PROGRAMS	PREPARES SUMMARIES
CONDUCTING SEMINARS	ANALYZES INDUSTRIAL REPORTS	TRANSLATES GERMAN
WRITING TECHNICAL REPORTS	MANAGES FILES	DEBRIEFING SOURCES
CONDUCTING EXTERNAL LIAISON	OPERATES RADIO	KEEPS BOOKS
TYPING	COORDINATES WITH OTHER OFFICES	DRIVES TRUCK
TAKING DICTATION	WRITES REGULATIONS	MAINTAINS AIR CONDITIONING
SUPERVISING	PREPARES CORRESPONDENCE	EVALUATES SIGNIFICANCE OF DATA
- For some jobs, duties may be broken down even further if supervisor considers it advisable, e.g., combined key and phone operation, in the case of a radio operator.

DESCRIPTIVE RATING NUMBER	1 - INCOMPETENT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY	6 - PERFORMS THIS DUTY IN AN OUTSTANDING MANNER
	2 - BARELY ADEQUATE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY	FOUND IN VERY FEW INDIVIDUALS HOLDING SIMILAR JOBS
SPECIFIC DUTY NO. 1	RATING NUMBER	SPECIFIC DUTY NO. 4
	RATING NUMBER	RATING NUMBER
SPECIFIC DUTY NO. 2	RATING NUMBER	SPECIFIC DUTY NO. 5
	RATING NUMBER	RATING NUMBER
SPECIFIC DUTY NO. 3	RATING NUMBER	SPECIFIC DUTY NO. 6
	RATING NUMBER	RATING NUMBER

3. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF MANNER OF JOB PERFORMANCE

DIRECTIONS: Stress strengths and weaknesses, particularly those which affect development on present job.

SECTION D. SUITABILITY FOR CURRENT JOB IN ORGANIZATION

DIRECTIONS: Take into account here everything you know about the individual....productivity, conduct in the job, pertinent personal characteristics or habits, special defects or talents....and how he fits in with your team. Compare him with others doing similar work of about the same level.

- DEFINITELY UNSUITABLE - HE SHOULD BE SEPARATED
- OF DOUBTFUL SUITABILITY...WOULD NOT HAVE ACCEPTED HIM IF I HAD KNOWN WHAT I KNOW NOW
- A BARELY ACCEPTABLE EMPLOYEE...BELOW AVERAGE BUT WITH NO WEAKNESSES SUFFICIENTLY OUTSTANDING TO WARRANT HIS SEPARATION
- OF THE SAME SUITABILITY AS MOST PEOPLE I KNOW IN THE ORGANIZATION
- A FINE EMPLOYEE - HAS SOME OUTSTANDING STRENGTHS
- AN UNUSUALLY STRONG PERSON IN TERMS OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ORGANIZATION
- EXCELLED BY ONLY A FEW IN SUITABILITY FOR WORK IN THE ORGANIZATION

IS THIS INDIVIDUAL BETTER SUITED FOR WORK IN SOME OTHER POSITION IN THE ORGANIZATION? ☐ YES ☐ NO. IF YES, EXPLAIN FULLY:

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FITNESS REPORT (Part II) POTENTIAL

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Consult current instructions for completing this report.

FOR THE SUPERVISOR: This report is a privileged communication to your supervisor, and to appropriate career management and personnel officials concerning the potential of the employee being rated. It is NOT to be shown to the rated employee. It is recommended that you read the entire report before completing any question. This report is to be completed only after the employee has been under your supervision FOR AT LEAST 90 DAYS. If less than 90 days, hold and complete after the 90 days has elapsed. If this is the INITIAL REPORT on the employee, however, it MUST be completed and forwarded to the OP no later than 30 days after the due date indicated in item 8 of Section E below.

SECTION E.

GENERAL

1. NAME (Last) (First) (Middle)	2. DATE OF BIRTH	3. SEX	4. SERVICE DESIGNATION
5. OFFICE/DIVISION/BRANCH OF ASSIGNMENT		6. OFFICIAL POSITION TITLE	
7. GRADE	8. DATE REPORT DUE IN OP	9. PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REPORT (Inclusive dates)	
10. TYPE OF REPORT (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> INITIAL <input type="checkbox"/> REASSIGNMENT-SUPERVISOR <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> ANNUAL <input type="checkbox"/> REASSIGNMENT-EMPLOYEE			

SECTION F.

CERTIFICATION

1. FOR THE RATER: I CERTIFY THAT THIS REPORT REPRESENTS MY BEST JUDGEMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL BEING RATED		
A. THIS DATE	B. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR	C. SUPERVISOR'S OFFICIAL TITLE
2. FOR THE REVIEWING OFFICIAL: I HAVE REVIEWED THIS REPORT AND NOTED ANY DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IN ATTACHED MEMO.		
A. THIS DATE	B. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE OF REVIEWING OFFICIAL	C. OFFICIAL TITLE OF REVIEWING OFFICIAL

SECTION G.

ESTIMATE OF POTENTIAL

1. POTENTIAL TO ASSUME GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES

DIRECTIONS: Considering others of his grade and type of assignment, rate the employee's potential to assume greater responsibilities. Think in terms of the kind of responsibility encountered at the various levels in his kind of work.

RATING NUMBER	1 - ALREADY ABOVE THE LEVEL AT WHICH SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE CAN BE EXPECTED
	2 - HAS REACHED THE HIGHEST LEVEL AT WHICH SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE CAN BE EXPECTED
	3 - MAKING PROGRESS, BUT NEEDS MORE TIME BEFORE HE CAN BE TRAINED TO ASSUME GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES
	4 - READY FOR TRAINING IN ASSUMING GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES
	5 - WILL PROBABLY ADJUST QUICKLY TO MORE RESPONSIBLE DUTIES WITHOUT FURTHER TRAINING
	6 - ALREADY ASSUMING MORE RESPONSIBILITIES THAN EXPECTED AT HIS PRESENT LEVEL
	7 - AN EXCEPTIONAL PERSON WHO IS ONE OF THE FEW WHO SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR EARLY ASSUMPTION OF HIGHER LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES

2. SUPERVISORY POTENTIAL

DIRECTIONS: Answer this question: Has this person the ability to be a supervisor? ☐ yes ☐ no. If your answer is yes, indicate below your opinion or guess of the level of supervisory ability this person will reach AFTER SUITABLE TRAINING. Indicate your opinion by placing the number of the descriptive rating below which comes closest to expressing your opinion in the appropriate column. If your rating is based on observing him supervise, note your rating in the "actual" column. If based on opinion of his potential, note the rating in the "potential" column.

DESCRIPTIVE RATING NUMBER	0 - HAVE NO OPINION ON HIS SUPERVISORY POTENTIAL IN THIS SITUATION	
	1 - BELIEVE INDIVIDUAL WOULD BE A WEAK SUPERVISOR IN THIS KIND OF SITUATION	
	2 - BELIEVE INDIVIDUAL WOULD BE AN AVERAGE SUPERVISOR IN THIS KIND OF SITUATION	
	3 - BELIEVE INDIVIDUAL WOULD BE A STRONG SUPERVISOR IN THIS SITUATION	
ACTUAL	POTENTIAL	DESCRIPTIVE SITUATION
		A GROUP DOING THE BASIC JOB (truck drivers, stenographers, technicians or professional specialists of various kinds) WHERE CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE SUBORDINATES IS FREQUENT (First line supervisor)
		A GROUP OF SUPERVISORS WHO DIRECT THE BASIC JOB (Second line supervisors)
		A GROUP, WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE SUPERVISORS, WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAJOR PLANS, ORGANIZATION AND POLICY (Executive level)
		WHEN CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE SUBORDINATES IS NOT FREQUENT
		WHEN IMMEDIATE SUBORDINATES' ACTIVITIES ARE DIVERSE AND NEED CAREFUL COORDINATION
		WHEN IMMEDIATE SUBORDINATES INCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX
		OTHER (Specify)

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3. COMMENTS CONCERNING INDIVIDUAL
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SECTION H.

FUTURE PLANS

1. TRAINING OR OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCE PLANNED FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

2. NOTE OTHER FACTORS, INCLUDING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN INDIVIDUAL'S FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS

SECTION I.

DESCRIPTION OF INDIVIDUAL

DIRECTIONS: This section is provided as an aid to describing the individual as you see him on the job. Interpret the words literally. On the page below are a series of statements that apply in some degree to most people. To the left of each statement is a box under the heading "category." Read each statement and insert in the box the category number which best tells how much the statement applies to the person covered by this report.

CATEGORY NUMBER

- X - HAVE NOT OBSERVED THIS; HENCE CAN GIVE NO OPINION AS TO HOW THE DESCRIPTION APPLIES TO THE INDIVIDUAL
- 1 - APPLIES TO THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE LEAST POSSIBLE DEGREE
- 2 - APPLIES TO INDIVIDUAL TO A LIMITED DEGREE
- 3 - APPLIES TO INDIVIDUAL TO AN AVERAGE DEGREE
- 4 - APPLIES TO INDIVIDUAL TO AN ABOVE AVERAGE DEGREE
- 5 - APPLIES TO INDIVIDUAL TO AN OUTSTANDING DEGREE

CATEGORY	STATEMENT	CATEGORY	STATEMENT	CATEGORY	STATEMENT
	1. ABLE TO SEE ANOTHER'S POINT OF VIEW		11. HAS HIGH STANDARDS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT		21. IS EFFECTIVE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH ASSOCIATES
	2. CAN MAKE DECISIONS ON HIS OWN WHEN NEED ARISES		12. SHOWS ORIGINALITY		22. IMPLEMENTS DECISIONS REGARDLESS OF OWN FEELINGS
	3. HAS INITIATIVE		13. ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITIES		23. IS THOUGHTFUL OF OTHERS
	4. IS ANALYTIC IN HIS THINKING		14. ADMITS HIS ERRORS		24. WORKS WELL UNDER PRESSURE
	5. STRIVES CONSTANTLY FOR NEW KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS		15. RESPONDS WELL TO SUPERVISION		25. DISPLAYS JUDGEMENT
	6. KNOWS WHEN TO SEEK ASSISTANCE		16. DOES HIS JOB WITHOUT STRONG SUPPORT		26. IS SECURITY CONSCIOUS
	7. CAN GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE		17. COMES UP WITH SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS		27. IS VERSATILE
	8. HAS MEMORY FOR FACTS		18. IS OBSERVANT		28. HIS CRITICISM IS CONSTRUCTIVE
	9. GETS THINGS DONE		19. THINKS CLEARLY		29. FACILITATES SMOOTH OPERATION OF HIS OFFICE
	10. CAN COPE WITH EMERGENCIES		20. COMPLETES ASSIGNMENTS WITHIN ALLOWABLE TIME LIMITS		30. DOES NOT REQUIRE STRONG AND CONTINUOUS SUPERVISION

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DEVELOPING A FITNESS REPORTING SYSTEM

TAB B

I. Statement of the Problem

One company with one manager who has a dozen subordinates needs no formal merit rating system to assist him in his personnel decisions. Somewhere between this situation and one where hundreds of supervisors are reporting on thousands of subordinates, the need for a formal system of merit rating becomes obvious if management is to have the information necessary for its personnel actions.

The need for a system gets general agreement. Confusion and controversy, however, surround the issues of purpose to be served, method to be used, and especially content of a report. Because of the controversial nature of reporting systems, it is often difficult to achieve sufficient stability for any kind of system to work. It is the general purpose of this paper to provide a framework for developing and maintaining a fitness reporting system (as CIA's merit rating system is called). If management sanction of this framework can be achieved, a significant step will have been taken toward achieving the stability needed to make CIA's system workable.

Reasons for the controversial nature of fitness reporting are many. Fitness reports do (or are thought to) affect the employee financially and emotionally by influencing promotions, assignments, and subsidized training. Methods of reporting an individual's performance or worth, reflecting human judgment, are far from infallible. Thus, there is always room for criticism and debate. This debate is usually couched in terms of the wide gap between practice and perfection in personnel actions rather than realistically in terms of the degree to which personnel actions are improved by a reporting system.

Raters' persistence in being generous in their evaluations, in desiring to report in meaningless stereotypes and generality, in being influenced in varying degrees by likes, dislikes, their convictions about the worth of certain traits, or behavior for certain purposes contribute to the fallibility of reporting. The real difficulties in observing job performance under conditions which make comparisons among individuals really feasible adds still another source of fallibility.

One approach to the problem of improving fitness reporting has emphasized training of supervisors; another the devising of special methods of reporting that attempt to minimize differences between raters because of likes, dislikes and other factors mentioned above. Without minimizing the need for these approaches to the problem, there is a third which has not

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- 2 -

been adequately explored. This is to clarify purposes for which fitness reports are used and then develop a system specifically adapted to each of these. This approach would clarify and simplify the rater's task.

It is not uncommon for users of fitness reports to list purposes of their systems in as varied manner as this: to select men for promotion or for special assignment; to aid in determining the order of lay-offs when reduction of force is necessary; to improve morale; to determine transfers; to plan careers; to help the supervisor deal more effectively with his subordinates. The questions (1) whether any two of these purposes are incompatible or (2) whether a fitness report can provide the complete answer to any have rarely been raised. For promotion to a position involving skills quite different from those used on a present job, information beyond that on job performance is clearly needed. The kind of procedure needed to evaluate for promotion would seem to be quite different from those required to engender an atmosphere between subordinate and supervisor conducive to discussion of weaknesses and how to improve them.

A system of fitness reporting aimed at helping supervisors to deal more effectively with subordinates will be termed a counseling system; whereas a system with the purpose of assisting management to reach better decisions on personnel matters will be termed a management system. This paper will analyze the requirements needed to fulfill these two purposes. This analysis will show that these purposes are not well served by a single system. The analysis will identify the first steps that should be taken to improve CIA's present system and to work toward the kind of a dual system considered essential.

II. Requirements

Once the purpose of a fitness reporting system has been defined specifically, the requirements can be considered under five headings: content, communication, records, training, and policies.

A. The Counseling System.

The purpose of this kind of system is to assist supervisors to deal more effectively with subordinates. This system is concerned with getting the supervisor to do something in relation to his subordinate--think more clearly, analyze better, or manage better.

1. Content Under a Counseling System

Since the purpose of the counseling system is to stimulate the supervisor to initiate and carry out a procedure, the content is the procedure rather than any standard check list of any kind. Is there a procedure which will promote the kind of thinking and action

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- 3 -

necessary? There is one that has promise—having the supervisor define for each subordinate what job performance is expected from him.

This step is more useful and more difficult than it first appears. It is no matter for casual thought; nor can a list of job elements be discovered that will automatically apply to all jobs with the same title or even to successive incumbents of the same job.

By far the majority of supervisors who attempt the task of defining what they expect from a subordinate will first discover that it is the rule rather than the exception for job requirements to vary among persons supposedly doing the same job. Two stenographers are working for the same supervisor. One has the special duty of managing a complex filing system, the other of serving as office receptionist. Moreover, it is performance of the special duties that is frequently more influential in determining how the supervisor values, i.e., rates, them than is the common duty of taking dictation. Secondly, supervisors will find they expect different things from subordinates in terms of such factors as length of service, period in a career, and age. Thirdly, it is extremely probable the supervisor will find what he expects from a given subordinate is highly specific. It is not dependability or industry that the supervisor really expects. It is rather the operation of a specific machine, the production of a specific kind of report, the management of a specific file.

The range of specific job elements revealed by such an analysis makes it plain that a standard set of terms cannot be provided to cover all jobs or even a number of subordinates with supposedly similar jobs.

There is just one person who can provide a realistic set of job elements appropriate for a specific individual on a specific job at a specific time under a specific supervisor. This person is the supervisor. The kind of thinking it takes the supervisor in preparing this set of job requirements will go a long way toward advancing the purpose of the counseling system of fitness reporting.

This analysis leads to four conclusions with respect to the content which is the concern of a counseling system. First, the system is largely a procedure; second, what content there is, is concerned strictly with job performance or characteristics or circumstances very directly related thereto; third, there will be no

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- 4 -

standard check list of job elements or traits in any report used in this system; fourth, the report form merely reflects the procedure to be followed.

2. Communicating Under a Counseling System

The essential communication is downward—from the supervisor to the subordinate. How else is the subordinate to know wherein he should improve? The most, if not only, effective medium for communication of this kind is the interview. In an on-going system one interview at the time of completing the Fitness Report is probably sufficient. During this interview, not only can past performance be discussed, but job elements can be re-defined in terms of the next rating period and specific goals agreed to by the two parties. Thus, the counseling system can provide changed goals in terms of the job requirements as well as in terms of the career plans of the individual. For a new subordinate, an initial interview is required to let him know what is expected of him between the initial interview and the time his Fitness Report is due.

Other interviews may occasionally be required between Fitness Reports. One such occasion is when job performance is so poor that termination is a likely possibility. Here a warning interview is clearly needed.

The need for communication downward leads to the conclusion that the entire report should be shown to the subordinate—complete with job elements and supervisor's comments, the latter having served as preparation for the interview.

Is there any need under the counseling system for communication upward? There appears none, so far as achieving the counseling purpose is concerned. A management purpose may be achieved by a limited movement upward of the records produced under this system. A supervisor's chief will gain considerable insight into methods the supervisor uses in managing his people and into the understanding he displays of jobs under his control.

Combining this much of a management objective with the counseling system may not introduce incompatible elements. Sending records too far up the echelons has definite dangers. The reports will be in such specific terms involving specific subordinates and specific supervisors that misinterpretation can easily be made by individuals too far removed from the immediate situation. Moreover, the fact that a permanent record is made will tend to reduce willingness on the part of both supervisor and subordinate to be completely frank

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- 5 -

with one another. Because of the importance of improving supervision, some risk in limited communication upward is probably justified.

3. Records Required

One might think there would be no reporting form required by a counseling system. The supervisor knows what he is writing on the form. Why, therefore, have a reporting form? From the counseling point of view the form serves three purposes. It provides a check list of steps in the procedure and a record of whether these steps were followed. It provides for future reference a record of job elements agreed to by a supervisor and a specified subordinate. It provides a space for the supervisor's analysis which serves as a basis for the interview.

This record is purely qualitative. There can be no score derived from the information on this kind of form. With different and highly specific job elements, there will be no possibility of comparing reports of different individuals. No effort, therefore, should be made to score or to combine the reports.

4. Training Under the Counseling System

To overcome two fears on the part of supervisors will require a real training effort. The first is his notion that the job elements are difficult for him to define. A demonstration worked out before a group usually allays this fear. The second fear, whether or not consciously expressed, concerns the interview. Many supervisors will doubt their ability to handle the situation properly. The more training that can be given in this respect the better, but it is surprising how little will suffice. The procedure as outlined serves as a real preparation for the interview. The supervisor knows what points he wants to make. He has thought them through in terms of the job elements and (prior to the interview) has expressed his points in writing on the report form itself. This interview is the crucial step in the system. Supervisors generally will undoubtedly handle it better if there is no evaluation attempted in relation to the system. Any evaluation effort changes the attitude of both the supervisor and the subordinate and makes the interview more difficult. The atmosphere of the interview tends to become one of attack and defense rather than one of mutual respect and confidence. These considerations represent a powerful argument for keeping the counseling aspect separate from the evaluation aspect of a fitness reporting system.

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- 6 -

5. Policies Under the Counseling System

Policies under this system should be aimed at creating conditions of mutual trust between the supervisor and his subordinates. It should be clear to all that the effort is directed at helping the subordinate to do a better job. It should be spelled out where the record is to be kept, what it is to be used for, and why it cannot be used for evaluative purposes.

B. The Management System

The purpose of a management system is to provide the information needed for improving personnel actions. How this is done will influence morale, but the purpose of the system is not to directly affect morale but to provide information. The system does not aim at improving the supervisor's relationship with his subordinate. To repeat, its purpose is to assist higher echelons in making better personnel decisions.

1. Content Under a Management System

For a merit rating system to contribute effectively to actions requires that it provide more information relevant to decisions management must make. The content of this system is information about employees, not a procedure to help supervisors think. Not only is it information, but it is information expressed in a manner which makes comparisons possible among individuals. Management is interested in general job competence and not in the details of supervision. Management is also interested in potential—how far the individual can progress in the chain of command. Just what information management will find useful will depend on the kind of decisions it wants to make at echelons higher than the immediate supervisor. Some of the following will no doubt be included in any management system: promotion, selection for career development, termination, transfer or rotation, selection for certain types of expensive training.

A management system report must, therefore, contain supervisors' value judgments on the degree of job competence, potential, and other matters related to the decisions management wants to make. Standard check lists and ratings are required; for in order to compare individuals, the same kind of information must be obtained about everyone.

How can the content of the rating form be determined? The most direct way is to ask management people what it uses fitness reports for and the decisions to which it would like them to contribute. A

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- 7 -

study to obtain this information is needed as one of the initial steps in developing this kind of system.

2. Communication Under the Management System

The essential communication is upward--from the supervisor to higher management echelons. The medium of communication must be a written report since decisions are not necessarily taken at the time the report is completed. Furthermore, all decisions do not involve the same people, making it impractical to communicate upward by any oral technique.

Communicating value judgments upward requires no interview with the subordinate. Nor does it require showing the report or discussing it with him. In fact, doing either of these things will tend to reduce the value of the report to management. Reports that are shown or discussed tend to be more lenient, less objective appraisals. In many instances, showing or discussing a value judgment with a subordinate reduces his job efficiency and morale. What point is there in periodically telling a person of long and loyal service that he is just a run-of-the-mill employee, that he has no potential for further advancement. Contrast this with the counseling system--where strengths and weaknesses can be discussed between supervisor and subordinate in an atmosphere free from the necessity of bringing up points the individual can do nothing about.

Less frequently mentioned is the point that it may be equally bad to inform some people that they are considered of special promise. Loss of motivation and decrease in performance can result.

The attitude the supervisor needs in completing a management report is a cool objectivity in his appraisal of job performance and capabilities of his subordinates, not one of helping or promoting his career in any way. It is management's task to do this when it gets all the information available.

3. Records Under a Management System

This system demands a record. It further demands that records be kept in such a way that successive reports on the same individual can be combined. Two things are necessary to achieve this. The reports must be scored, i.e., they must lend themselves to quantitative treatment. They must be scored in a manner that permits successive reports to be compared, even though changes are made in the report content. Most importantly, they must be scored in order that successive reports can be averaged. Despite hard effort, no system of reporting has been devised to reduce the

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fallibility of human judgment of one another which even approaches the simple device of averaging judgments of several observers. The averaging of successive reports made by different supervisors represents the most important technique for improving a management type system. It will result in actions that are more effective and more just to the individual. Reports for a management system should be regarded as quantitative documents.

4. Training Under a Management System

Training efforts need to be directed at creating in the supervisor a willingness to make an objective and impersonal appraisal of his subordinates. While those rated will know the system exists and must have confidence in the way management uses it, training effort need not be directed at them. In fact, other than creating the right attitude toward reporting, probably the less said about a management system the better it is.


The major focus of training in a management system is management itself. The training should be directed to clarification of limitations and advantages of the report for different and specified purposes. As a basis for their training, studies of reliability and validity of the report for various purposes are necessary. The relationship of information furnished by fitness reports to other personnel techniques and information such as tests, experience, and education needs to be discovered and conveyed to management. In fact, the background and context permitting sound use of the system must be developed and furnished.

5. Policies Under the Management System

The main purpose of policies under a management system is to develop confidence that personnel actions are taken after consideration of all the facts and not on the basis of a single report. Everyone realizes that personnel actions are inevitable. If they feel that they are taken after careful consideration of all the facts and with due consideration of the limitations of any single source, e.g., fitness reports, willingness on the part of supervisors to report may be increased.

III. Recapitulation

This analysis strongly points to the need for having more than one fitness reporting system to accomplish many purposes such reports are used for. A distinction should certainly be made between systems for counseling as opposed to management purposes.




- 9 -

These two systems contain incompatible elements. Under a management system, the purpose is to promote effective personnel action; the supervisor must regard his subordinate objectively and report in general and standard terms; the report must lend itself to quantitative treatment and studies of reliability and validity for specific purposes; no interview between supervisor and subordinate is required, nor should the report be shown to the subordinate. In fact, doing either of these things will tend to defeat the purpose of the system.

In contrast, a counseling system has the purpose of getting a supervisor to do something which will improve his effectiveness in dealing with a subordinate. The supervisor regards the subordinate in terms of his own particular strengths and weaknesses with no reference to anyone else. The supervisor is not reporting in general competitive or comparative terms, but in terms that are highly specific to the subordinate's situation, i.e., he may discuss and report weaknesses of very strong employees and vice versa with no implication concerning the degree of value he places upon either as an employee. The report under such a system is qualitative—it cannot be scored; nor does it lend itself to the usual kind of studies of reliability and validity. An interview is mandatory; it is the crux of the system. The report in its entirety must be shown to the subordinate. Both systems of reporting need acceptance on the part of employees generally to be truly effective. Both systems need stability in policy to operate well. To promote stability and implement systems of reporting adapted to differing purposes, it is necessary that there be acceptance of the philosophy expressed herein. It is also essential to conduct a series of studies to further clarify purposes and develop more effective procedures for each.

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